

Job Fair Tips: *BEFORE, DURING, and AFTER*

BEFORE the event:

- ✦ **Update your resume.** Make sure it is accurate, easy to read and complete. Include your contact information, educational and employment history, licenses and certifications, and work skills. Bring several copies of your resume with you in a simple folder to keep them clean and tidy.
- ✦ **Research the employers you are interested in working for.** Visit their websites to find out who they are, what they and why you want to work there. Find out what jobs they're recruiting for and what skills are required. Think of good examples of how you've used each of those skills so you have ready answers to any skills-related questions. Think of some good questions to ask the employer at the end of your chat.
- ✦ **Practice your Sales Pitch** — a short speech (2-3 minutes max) that "sells" you to hiring agents:
 - Give your name
 - State your profession, occupation, or the job you're looking for
 - Briefly outline your experience, skills and professional/work-based accomplishments
 - Highlight that one special skill/quality/strength that sets you apart from the competition (fast learner, hard worker, always give maximum effort, reliable, easy to coach, problem solver, etc.)
- ✦ **Be ready for questions from the hiring agents.** Prepare responses and examples beforehand:
 - "Tell me a little bit about yourself." Answer by reciting your Sales Pitch.
 - "Tell me about your skills." Use your fingers to count off your top four or five job skills, with a short example of how and when you've used each skill.
 - "Why do you want to work for our company?" Do your research on the company so you have a memorable, positive response ready to go.
- ✦ **Dress for Success!** First impressions are critical, so dress conservatively in clean clothes and shoes that you'd wear to an interview. Make sure you are neat and well groomed so that you feel comfortable and respectable. Take a shower, comb your hair, brush your teeth, use deodorant, trim/tidy up your fingernails, wear minimal perfume and jewelry, and pop a breath mint. Don't carry a huge purse or backpack. Look put together!

DURING the event:

- ✦ **Carry your folder of resumes, a notebook to take notes and a pen.** Avoid carrying anything extra.
- ✦ **Don't bring children, pets or friends to the hiring event.** You need to stay focused on the hiring agents.
- ✦ **Give yourself a pep talk!** Cultivate a positive, open-minded mood for the event. Use your best interpersonal skills to make a positive impression on every one you meet. You never know when an employer might tell another employer about you! You never know when someone you meet in the hallway is going to turn out to be the employer you want to work for!

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- ✦ ***Don't be shy about introducing yourself to the hiring agents.*** They want you! If they didn't need employees, they wouldn't be at the job fair. They need to meet you!
- ✦ ***When it's your turn to talk to a hiring agent:***
 - Offer your firm handshake with good eye contact and give your short sales pitch
 - Answer the recruiter's questions
 - Ask a few thoughtful questions of your own to keep the conversation going
 - State (in so many words) that you are interested in the job and hand the recruiter your resume.
 - Ask for the recruiter's business card so you can follow up after the job fair.
 - Ask for an interview or say "How should I follow up with you, and when?"—then take notes!
- ✦ ***Do be professional, enthusiastic and courteous.*** Show some humor. Let your personality shine through.
- ✦ ***Don't be stiff, shy, fidgety, slouchy or unfocused.*** Don't chew gum, eat or drink while at the recruiting booth. Don't say anything negative about yourself, a former company or a boss. Don't gossip. Stay professional at all times.
- ✦ ***Take breaks as necessary to stay hydrated and keep your energy positive and high.***
- ✦ ***If you have to leave before getting a chance to talk to the recruiter, take one of their business cards so you can follow up by phone, email or letter.***

AFTER the event:

- ✦ ***Leave a lasting impression.*** Think of the job fair as your first contact with the employer, not your last. Follow up with a thank-you note to the recruiter (handwritten is best). Remind them of your interest in the job and your qualifications.
- ✦ ***Thank them for their time in talking to you at the job fair (remind them which one), refresh their memory of you by mentioning something specific that you talked about, and restate your wish for an interview.*** State that you will follow up with a phone call next week to see what next steps can be taken. Then follow up!
- ✦ ***Stay in touch with the hiring agents you met.*** Most people find new jobs through networking (talking to people they know) and those hiring agents are now in your network—so stay in touch with them! Once or twice a month, send them a short note and a fresh copy of your resume to let them know that you are still available and interested in working for their company.
- ✦ ***Be persistent—and always be professional.***



For additional information about Missouri Office of Workforce Development services, contact a Missouri Job Center near you. Locations and additional information are available at jobs.mo.gov or 1-888-728-JOBS (5627).

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